



Montana

## Department of Labor and Industry

Commissioner's Office

Contact Casey Kyler-West, Communications Director  
TELEPHONE: (406)444-1520  
FAX: (406)444-1394  
E-mail: [ckylwest@mt.gov](mailto:ckylwest@mt.gov)

P.O. BOX 1728  
HELENA, MT  
59624-1728

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Displaced Workers See \$25 Increase in Weekly Unemployment Benefits**

(Helena) Labor Commissioner Keith Kelly announced the signing of an agreement with the U.S. Department of Labor that increases unemployment compensation to all the eligible unemployed workers by \$25 each week. "This is the first of the Recovery and Reinvestment funding to hit Montana and it will make a difference for those families who are barely scraping by during these tough economic times," says Commissioner Kelly. "This additional one hundred dollars a month can help with a utility bill, groceries, gas or any other typical family expense."

The Assistance for Unemployed Workers and Struggling Families Act is part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. The increase became effective the week of February 22, 2009 and ends December 26, 2009. Because this is the first week payment could be implemented, this week's payment will be retroactive to February 22, 2009. The stimulus increase will be automatically added to each eligible payment from this week forward.

The \$25 weekly increase affects roughly 16,000 Montanans receiving unemployment benefits and Emergency Unemployment Compensation. "This is also a boost to the businesses on Montana's Main Streets. Each dollar received in benefits gets returned two and half times in the local community," says Labor Commissioner Keith Kelly.

Claimants who are eligible for the increase have been notified and will not be required to fill out any additional applications or paperwork. Because the increase is federally funded, there is no additional cost for employers.

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